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Abstract

WHY THE SEARCH FOR URANIUM SHOULD CONTINUE

by MM. MABILE
GANGLOFF
SORNEIN

(Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique, France)

At the 1958 Geneva conference a report was given of the hopes placed in French uranium resources, and the work in hand on projects for mines and mills. Even though the French ground continued to confirm its promises, production has been limited because of the risk of massive over-production. Moreover worlwide production surpluses remove any immediate worries about supplies.

1. - However, the French uranium potential, at the rate of exploitation which can be reasonably foreseen, seems to be limited, promising only a few decades of production.

2. - This situation is more serious still for Europe as a whole, at the very time when the rapid expansion of atomic energy is beginning.

3. - On a world wide basis it may be anticipated that after the closing down of mines, an equilibrium between production and requirments will be reached in ten years, the increase in production being then easily achieved by the reopening of temporarily closed mines.

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4. - However, by 1980 the requirments will exceed the maximum production capacity laid down in 1960-1961.

5. - Finaliy, towards the end of the century, there will be a discrepancy between the uranium reserves then necessary, and those which have been discovered so far in the world, at the cost of the considerable efforts made during the years 1948-1958.

No time should be lost in an effort to discover new resources :

- either in countries not yet prospected
- or by the use of more sensitive methods.

Failing this, the uranium marhet, badly shaken by present over-production, will suffer new crises unless the mining industry is well prepared in advance for a rapid exponential expansion after 1975-1980.